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ABSTRACT

A two-part organizational development project carried out at the University of California San Francisco School of Dentistry is described in this brief report. The project goal was to find out what the school is like and how it is perceived by both staff and students. The first phase, needs assessment, was carried out to identify critical organizational and curricular problems, to recommend appropriate entry points for intervention strategies, and to design an on-going program for planned change and institutional renewal. Procedures used to collect data included informal discussion and structured interviews with faculty, administrators, and students. Major problems illuminated by phase one include: lack of communication, fragmentation of curriculum, inadequate training in teaching methodology, and inadequacies in the testing and grading system. The second phase focused on defining curricular goals and objectives. It is suggested that curricular development must be a fluid process to meet the changing needs of the dental profession. (SF)

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U.C.S.F. School of Dentistry

Summary Report

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EVALUATION AND TRAINING INSTITUTE
An inter-disciplinary center for research, training, evaluation and policy studies

Los Angeles, California

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AT THE SCHOOL OF DENTISTRY, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN FRANCISCO

SUMMARY REPORT

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Evaluation and Training Institute

Los Angeles, California

1977-78

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During the 1977-78 academic year, the Evaluation and Training Institute undertook a two-part organizational development project at the University of California, San Francisco School of Dentistry. The first part of the project consisted of an organizational diagnosis and needs assessment. The second phase of the project focused on the curriculum and consisted of defining measurable goals and objectives for the curricular program of the school.

The purpose of the needs assessment phase was threefold: 1) to identify critical organizational and curricular problems which directly and indirectly affect the functioning of the School and the quality of its educational program; 2) to recommend appropriate entry points for intervention strategies which could most effectively redress the problems identified; and 3) to design an on-going program for planned change and institutional renewal which could serve as a basis for continued improvement of the quality and effectiveness of the organization and its instructional program.

ORGANIZATIONAL DIAGNOSIS AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Methodology. The information-gathering procedures took place at the school site in San Francisco, and provided an understanding of the School of Dentistry as a system and established the foundation for the development of a recommended program for institutional change and renewal.

A variety of procedures were used to gain the information desired: semi-structured interviews and informal discussions with individuals and groups, unstructured observations of classes, laboratories and clinics, and an examination of documents. The documents provided background information regarding the history of the School and critical events in its growth, and the unstructured observations and informal conversations enabled us to explore issues in greater depth and to discover issues that had not come to our attention in the interviews.

Structured interviews of two-hours length were held with a sample of 29 full-time faculty preselected by the on-site project coordinator to be representative of all curricular areas, faculty ranks, tenured and non-tenured status and length of time at the School. All of the major School committees were also represented. In addition to meeting with faculty, a two-hour session was held with a group of students representing all class levels, and a special one-hour session was held with the Dean and his administrative associates.

Informal discussions with faculty and students also took place throughout the investigation. A memo was sent to all faculty inviting them to "drop in" during an open, two-hour session, and ETI staff informally visited with faculty and students in the clinics and laboratories.

The major questions asked were similar for all three groups --faculty, administrators and students. No attempt was made to interpret the answers or influence the direction of the responses

by delimiting the scope of the questions or channeling the respondents' answers. One exception was that faculty and students were discouraged from pursuing lines of discussion about problems related to the facilities. Everyone agreed that the facilities were poor, but felt that the situation would be improved once the new building is completed.

Throughout the entire data gathering process, the focus and intent was on exploration and discovery. The goal was to find out what the School is like and how it is perceived by both staff and students. Although we naturally formed our own impressions, the reality of the organization as defined by its members was our primary concern, since it is their perceptions that influence the functioning and environment of the School. The relationship we attempted to establish with those we met reflected this perspective. That is, they were considered the experts with respect to the organizational operation and functioning and the School's programs and processes. We were there to be educated. We listened carefully to what people told us and observed how they talked to us and interacted with each other.

The major problems raised by faculty, students and administrators focused on lack of communication, fragmentation of the curriculum, inadequate training in teaching methodology and inadequacies in the testing and grading system. With these problems in mind, ETI developed a program with faculty, department chairs and administrators, designed to create a climate and institute processes which encourage the flow of communication among

and between constituent groups; facilitate transactions and the sharing of information; and instill the sense of shared goals and commitment necessary to constructively confront differences and develop mutual trust.

The second phase process of defining goals and objectives began with a list of tentative school goals derived at a meeting between the ETI project staff and the five department/division chairpersons. They were then circulated among all faculty for their reactions. The faculty were also requested to suggest measurement and evaluation formats which would be appropriate for measuring whether students had achieved the knowledge and skills specified in the goals. Their comments regarding both the goals and measurements were synthesized, the goals were revised accordingly, and they were again circulated to all faculty to obtain further input. The returned comments were synthesized and circulated a final time, with the understanding that any goal and its accompanying measurement and evaluation formats receiving more than two-thirds approval would be accepted and included in the compendium of goals for the pre-doctoral dental curriculum.

Eighty percent of the full-time faculty and 65 percent of the part-time faculty voluntarily participated in the entire process, and on the final round of circulation no goal received less than 91 percent agreement. In fact, the average approval rate for the school was 97 percent.

Concurrent with the school-wide goal development process, similar procedures were instituted for three of the departments and their divisions (Growth and Development, Periodontology and Restorative Dentistry) and the Division of General Dentistry. The Department of Oral Medicine and Hospital Dentistry chose not to participate in this phase of the project.

As a result of meetings with each of the departments and division chairpersons, tentative goals and measurements were developed and circulated to all of their respective faculty. Returned comments were synthesized by the ETI staff and chairpersons (in one instance the entire Educational Policy Committee of a division) and sent back for further faculty comment a minimum of two times. In several instances, the process continued for three or four rounds; three other departments and divisions also had at least one meeting of their entire faculty to develop the final listing of goals.

Faculty participation in the department and division goal development process ranged from 85 to 100 percent, and all goals were approved by at least 95 percent of those faculty involved in the process. Although these goals thus represent a solidarity of thought among the faculty responsible for their attainment, they are not intended to be static.

The dental profession is continuously growing and changing, and the curricular goals will need to be modified accordingly. Curricular development is a fluid process, and the dialogue sur-

rounding curricular concerns can now be guided by a document which can be used as a basis for assessing, revising and developing curricular programs and techniques of instruction and measurement.

In addition to the curricular goal process, ETI conducted a series of workshops for faculty on a variety of topics such as Improving the Lecture, Evaluating Student Performance, Developing Competency-Based Test Items and Improving Instruction. Thus the second phase activities complemented those of the first phase of the project and together provided a support system for on-going renewal and planned change.

Some of the departments and divisions have already begun to refine their measurement and evaluation formats. Others are planning to examine the manner in which each of their courses relates to the goals appropriate to their teaching program and develop useable, measurable course objectives which will assure attainment of goals at the department and divisional level.